

COBURN AMENDMENT 682: LIMIT INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR MEANS-TESTED PROGRAMS

This amendment would call for strengthening all eligibility requirements for federal means-tested programs to be 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

- A George Mason University analysis published last fall in *National Affairs* showed that federal antipoverty programs spend billions on those with incomes over 200 percent of the federal poverty level. In fact, the analysis shows that over half of our federal spending on major welfare programs goes to Americans above the poverty line.
- Many of these programs already have limits of 200 percent of the poverty level, yet millions of people over this line are receiving benefits reserved for the poor.
- In SNAP, 8 million participants had incomes over 200 percent of the poverty level.
- Of the non-disabled population in Medicaid and CHIP, 10.5 million people – or 17 percent – have incomes above 200 percent of the poverty line.
- About 25 percent of TANF recipients have 12-month incomes over 200 percent of the poverty line, receiving \$6 billion in benefits.
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC): About 20 percent of people receiving the EITC – 5.6 million people – have incomes over 200 percent of the poverty line.
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI): 2.5 million recipients have incomes over 200 percent of the poverty line. According to study's authors, "Official program guidelines suggest that benefits should not be available to people with this level of income."
- About 500,000 people with incomes over 200 percent of the poverty line receiving direct housing assistance from federal programs.
- We should strengthen these programs to ensure their current requirements are not being circumvented by categorical eligibility or any income calculation method.